

# HOW TO CREATE AND SUBMIT A COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Community Impact Statements are official statements or positions adopted by a Neighborhood Council on issues pending before the city's decision makers. The Community Impact Statement process was created specifically for Neighborhood Councils in order to publically express their support, opposition, or suggestions about any matter pending before the City Council, its committees, or City commissions. A Community Impact Statement (CIS) is an official statement used to express the position of a Neighborhood Council (NC) as a whole, and is **not** to be used to express personal opinions.

**Tip:** While the CIS allows your Neighborhood Council to communicate collectively, your board members and stakeholders can continue to communicate their views individually. In fact, letters submitted to the City Clerk with an identifiable Council file number are also included in Council files. A submission reflecting the opinion of a single individual is called public comment/public communication.

## Creating and submitting a CIS requires the following steps:

### Step 1: Recognize who your filers are.

- ❖ Every Neighborhood Council is designated 5 Community Impact Statement Filers. If your Neighborhood Council does not have Filers, please notify the President so the Board may vote and appoint new Filers. (Please send a copy of your Minutes, detailing the board vote, as well as the new Filers' contact information). If your Neighborhood Council has Filers that need updated usernames and passwords, please contact Lorenzo Briceno at the following email address:

[lorenzo.briceno@lacity.org](mailto:lorenzo.briceno@lacity.org)

### Step 2: Identify the Council File.

- ❖ Every issue pending before the City Council and its committees is assigned to a Council file with a unique Council file number. (Sometimes new numbers and/or supplemental numbers are assigned as an issue progresses through the legislative process.
- ❖ To identify new items which have been introduced in City Council, subscribe to "New Council Items (Referrals)" at [lacity.org/city-government/subscribe-meeting-agendas-and-more/council-council-committees-ad-hoc-committees](http://lacity.org/city-government/subscribe-meeting-agendas-and-more/council-council-committees-ad-hoc-committees)
- ❖ To identify existing items, visit <https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm> and conduct a search in the Council File Management System. To track a Council file, subscribe for updated notifications by clicking on the email icon.



**TIP:** On any given week, numerous issues get introduced or acted upon in City Council and its committees. You and your NC may find it helpful to create a strategy for identifying and

tracking issues that are most important to you. You may choose to focus on issues in your geographically defined neighborhood, in your Council District, or citywide. In addition, some Councils have appointed individuals as Council Liaisons, specifically in charge of tracking council files, or particular issues important to that Neighborhood Council.

**Step 3:** Establish a Community Impact Statement process.

- ❖ The City Clerk will accept statements only from Neighborhood Councils that have governing boards in place and have voted in a public meeting in accordance with the Brown Act. The CIS must be a statement which expresses a position that has been voted upon by a full Neighborhood Council board.

**TIP:** A clear advantage to requiring full board votes for a particularly worded CIS is that it generates more engagement. On the other hand, some issues move through City Council within days or weeks, not giving a Neighborhood Council the opportunity to take a full board vote. For that reason, NC's may want to form generic statements on a range of topics, in the event there is little time before the item is before City Council.

**Step 4: Write a Community Impact Statement.**

- ❖ An NC may submit a CIS on any Council file, or on any item pending before a city commission.
- ❖ A CIS that is directed to City Council and Committees **MUST** contain a Council file number; otherwise the City Clerk will not know where to place it.
- ❖ A CIS can be any length, though the more concise, the better. (See template at end of document.)
- ❖ A CIS needs to clearly communicate a position on the proposal, whether the Neighborhood Council is:
  - For
  - For-if Amended
  - Against
  - Against unless Amended
  - No Position
  - Neutral PositionThis helps the City Clerk accurately print the NC's position on the agenda. Otherwise it will be listed as general comments.
- ❖ A CIS should include information about how the CIS was approved by the NC. Was it voted on by the entire NC board, or was it written by an officer authorized by the board to express its' previously voted upon position. Include the vote count.
- ❖ A Neighborhood Council may use its statement to request a delay of a vote. However, such a request cannot prevent the City Council from taking an action.
- ❖ A new CIS must be submitted after each Council action. The original position taken by your NC may not be the same position after the Council as acted.

**TIP:** Clear and concise statements are effective. For issues that require lengthier statements, a brief summary at the beginning is useful. If the vote was divided, what were the divisions? Were stakeholders also engaged on this issue through surveys or other means? Providing such detail will give decision-makers additional insight into your community's views and values.

**Step 5:** Submit a Community Impact Statement.

Board appointed NC representative may only submit Community Impact Statements through the electronic portal.

- FILE ONLINE WEB FORM at <http://empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Authorization-to-submit-CIS-Form.pdf>

The best way to submit a CIS is through this online web form which was developed specifically to facilitate the accurate and timely receipt of CIS's. To set up your access (or login), a Neighborhood Council submits a board resolution to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment which indicates that it has appointed up to five representatives who are authorized to submit its statements. The NC also provides the representatives' name, email address and phone number to [ncsupport@lacity.org](mailto:ncsupport@lacity.org) or by fax to (213) 978-1751. Representatives will then be sent instructions on how to login and use the system.

**Step 6:** Follow up on the Community Impact Statement.

- ❖ If the statement is received in time to be processed prior to the posting of the agenda, the NC's position of which of the following, will be printed on the agenda.
  - For
  - For-if Amended
  - Against
  - Against unless Amended
  - No Position
  - Neutral PositionThe full statement and any *pdf* attachments will be placed in the Council file so that it can be retrieved by the public through the Internet.
- ❖ If a CIS is not received in time for publication on the agenda, the CIS is distributed to each member of the legislative body before the Council/Committee meeting, placed on the Council file, and announced at the Council/Committee meeting that a CIS has been submitted and received. At the discretion of the Chair, the CIS may be read into the record.

**TIP:** If your Neighborhood Council has gone through the process of identifying an issue, understanding it, and reaching a consensus, then your NC has invested a lot of energy into its Community Impact Statement. Consider it a living document. Share it with others. Resubmit it as the issue goes through the legislative process, so it will reappear on subsequent agendas. The Community Impact Statement can be a valuable tool to help your Neighborhood Council fulfill its purpose, "to promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs." - *LA City Charter Sec. 900.*